

THREE COUNT[®]

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Wrestle Snore? Foresight lacking for WCW PPV Card

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

Remember when pay-per-view cards in wrestling were major events? When feuds culminated? When matchups not available on television graced the screen? When the PPV show tried to reflect the promotion's scenarios?

If World Championship Wrestling's Wrestle War pay-per-view show May 17 is any indication, those days are long gone. This show is disorganized and lacks direction toward almost every WCW storyline (the few they have). Of course, this PPV is a perfect reflection toward the company itself. The following is a review of the show, with predictions and analysis to boot.

- **Johnny B. Badd vs. Young Pistol Tracey:** Badd has been WCW's most active campaigner for the show in Jacksonville, arriving May 11 to begin hyping the card through various radio and personal appearances. Unfortunately for Badd, all his community service work is not paying off in any sort of an increased push. This match is merely filler that should have been placed on WCW's syndicated shows. **Prediction:** Badd wins with the top-rope sunset flip in about seven minutes in a better than average match.

- **Ron Simmons-Junkyard Dog vs. Cactus Jack-Mr. Hughes:** Another match that means nothing in the large scheme of WCW. I believe singles matches were originally scheduled between Simmons-Hughes and Jack-JYD, but this merger should be better for everyone involved. At press time, WCW may have changed its mind again and split up the tag into singles. It's a good thing Dusty Rhodes isn't booking matches off the cuff. One thing that really gets me upset is the teaming of Simmons and JYD seemingly because they are both black. **Prediction:** Another babyface win, with JYD pinning Jack in a so-so bout.

- **Marcus Alexander Bagwell vs. Scotty Flamingo:** WCW has insured Scotty won't get over because of the ridiculous "Flamingo Madness" moniker, making him look like a Randy Savage wanna be. These two have worked together frequently before, so this should be a good bout. **Prediction:** Flamingo gets the win when J.T. Southern interferes.

- **The Freebirds vs. Greg Valentine-Terry Taylor:** Every wrestling insider knows the U.S. tag-team titles are switching hands in this bout. Why the Freebirds -- I wish I knew. Look for a Valentine-Taylor split and subse-

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Tatsumi Fujinami, shown above, and Takayuki Iizuka team to face Rick-Scott Steiner May 17 at Wrestle War.

Briefly

- Expect an expansion in the role Madusa plays on World Championship Wrestling telecasts within the next few months. "Madusa is a very talented performer," said WCW executive vice president Kip Frey. "We have to find a way to take advantage of all the things she can do." The wrestling grapevine had WCW negotiating with All Japan Women's Pro Wrestling to bring in Bull Nakano for a feud, but Frey said negotiations between the two groups have not begun.

- **WCW taped its in-studio portions of WCW Saturday Night on May 11 for upcoming telecasts May 23, May 30 and June 6.** The May 23rd show will open with Missy Hyatt in a bikini top and a bikini bottom worn over tight bicycle shorts introducing Jim Ross. Former Oakland Raiders and Houston Oilers tight end Dave Casper was the guest host. Diamond Dallas Page was the interview guest, and Page showed a video tape of Paul E. Dangerously paying off the girls who blasphemed Ricky Steamboat on the May 9 WCW Saturday Night telecast. After the video was shown, Dangerously emerged and began screaming at DDP. Just when it appeared the two were about to fight, Steamboat walked down from the back row of chairs at Center Stage and entered the ring. Larry Zbyszko, Bobby Eaton and Arn Anderson then popped out

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Briefly

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to protect Dangerously. Steamboat appeared to be walking away, but abruptly turned around and began brawling with all three. Nikita Koloff, Dustin Rhodes and Barry Windham then emerged, giving the babyfaces a 4-on-3 advantage. Steamboat worked his way from the brawl, confronted Dangerously and ripped Paul's pants off. The whole angle is supposed to be excellent.

The May 23rd show is also the first that has more than one match taped in Center Stage. Rick-Scott Steiner defeated Tracey Smothers-Ricky Morton when Scott Steiner pinned Smothers after a top-rope bulldog. Steve Williams and Terry Gordy then proceeded to annihilate Joey Maggs and Terry Bronson, ending when Gordy powerslammed Bronson. Apparently, the jobbers were able to walk away from the ring without help, but Maggs was bleeding in three or four places. The Super Invader ("Hercules" Ray Hernandez) won a handicap match (Although Hercules wrestles as though he is handicapped, this was a match against two jobbers). The main event was Koloff-Steamboat-Rhodes vs. Anderson-Eaton-Zybyszko in a two-of-three fall match. Steamboat pinned Zybyszko in the first

fall with a cross body-block off the top rope, causing Zybyszko to be yelled at by his teammates. The babyfaces were disqualified in the second fall when Rhodes was caught using Dangerously's phone. Koloff pinned Anderson in the decisive fall when Zybyszko accidentally hit Anderson on a botched double-team attempt. The Dangerous Alliance continued yelling at Zybyszko, but the heels left the ring together.

- Not too much happened for the show that will air May 30th. Ricky Rackman of MTV's *Headbanger's Ball* was the guest host. Anderson was the interview subject, and he talked about his upcoming series of matches with Sting. The main event of the show has The Great Muta defeating Brad Armstrong in two straight falls. Muta (who is on a week-long U.S. tour) won the first fall in 12 minutes with a small package. The fall started slowly, but had a bunch of great near falls at the end. Muta won the second fall in six minutes with a handspring elbow leading into a moonsault press.

- The main event of the June 6th show has Windham vs. Anderson for the WCW television title, but the match was not taped at Center Stage (I'm told it will likely be filmed at a house show). The Lightning Kid also debuted in a match

THREE COUNT®

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Sheet Spotlight

Here's a look at the top stories of some of the other wrestling newsletters, with subscription information:

- **Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer Newsletter** (May 11): A complete analysis of the latest WWF scandal coverage by the mainstream media, including stories by *A Current Affair*, *Steppin' Out* and *Toronto Xtra*. Report from anabolic steroid education seminar held by Dr. David Lee Black for WCW wrestlers; Analysis of the Sid Justice suspension, and news and notes from around the world. *Weekly*; \$1.50 an issue. P.O. Box 1228, Campbell CA 95009-1228.

- **Ron Lemieux's Arena Report** (May 4): Complete run down of May 1 WCW television taping in St. Petersburg; Great K.C. O'Connor column on how Brian Pillman can be repackaged; News, letters and regional reports as well. *Bi-weekly*; \$1 an issue. P.O. Box 952547, Lake Mary, FL 32795-2547.

- **John Arezzi's Pro Wrestling Spotlight** (May 4): "Diary of a Madman" covering the role John has played in the WWF anabolic steroid and wrestling scandals since July 1991; Reprint of *New York Daily News* article covering the split between John and Vince Russo; John's "Mat Memories" on Mel Phillips. A very impressive debut issue. *Weekly*; \$1.50 an issue. 136 N. Carll Ave., Suite 125, Babylon, NY 11702.

that was taped for television (with no scheduled air date) against Bob Cook. The match was reportedly a four-and-a-half star match (out of five), with Kid doing every hot move he knows onto Cook. Former body-building champion Lee Haney was scheduled to host the June 6 show, but was replaced by Dangerously for reasons unknown at press time. Hyatt and Madusa began their feud, with Madusa taking off her jacket to reveal a bathing suit comprised of 98 percent fish net in a confrontation with Hyatt. Hyatt then began taking off her clothes until Doug Dillinger restrained her. I swear, I'm not making this up.

- Page has replaced Steve Beverly on WCW's 900-number service. "It's our number, and we want our employees to be on it," Frey said. "It's nothing against Steve." When asked about how successful Beverly's line was, Frey said, "I wouldn't characterize it as one of our biggest sellers. It was third or fourth in sales."

WCW Botches PPV Line-up

(Continued from Page 1)

quent feud in a couple of months. **Prediction:** Michael Hayes pins Valentine after a DDT.

- **Brian Pillman vs. Tom Zenk:** The build-up for this match is coming May 16 on *WCW Saturday Night*. Does WCW really think this feud is going to convince people to buy the pay-per-view show at the last minute? One would think a much more effective scenario would have the Dangerous Alliance waylaying Sting's ribs, but, I get paid to write instead of book obvious angles. The Pillman-Zenk match, though, has the potential to be excellent. Pillman's injured back, which has kept him out of action for about six weeks, should be fine come match-time. **Prediction:** Pillman pins Zenk with the same roll-up he used to defeat Jushin Lyger on the Super Brawl pay-per-view show.

- **Rick-Scott Steiner vs. Tatsumi Fujinami-Takayuki Iizuka:** The mere match-up of these two teams just goes to show you how screwed up the WCW-New Japan Pro Wrestling relationship is. No Japanese tag-teams are over with the American public. This is because fans continue to see a mish-mash of performers and can't just focus on remembering the names of two athletes. In the past two years, we've seen the following Japanese teams on major WCW shows: Masa Saito-The Great Muta, Hiroshi Hase-Kensuke Sasaki and Hase-Masa Chono. Hearing WCW announcer Jim Ross talk about how great these teams are means nothing, as none of those teams has beaten a respected U.S. team on American television. The reason Fujinami and Iizuka are wrestling in this match is because Japanese fans regard Japanese stars wrestling in America as a big deal. Fujinami has been drastically downplayed the past few years (and justifiably so) because of injuries and outstanding younger talent, but he still wields a lot of power in NJPW. So to appease Fujinami, he is wrestling in this match. Iizuka and Akira Nogami in the NWA tag-team tournament are appearing in the U.S. to get themselves over, as they are currently just faces in the crowd of NJPW lightweight-heavyweights.

Of course, there is the argument of why Hase and Nogami are in the NWA tournament. They are not regular tag-team partners. Their names mean nothing to American fans except for those that read wrestling newsletters. Muta should actually be teaming with Hase. They are a regular team in Japan, and gobs of footage of the duo is available. But since WCW is stuck with Hase-Nogami, why not have them come in as a last-minute replacement for Fujinami-Iizuka and let them defeat the Steiners cleanly. This way, Hase-Nogami would not only get over with the general public, but fans would likely regard all the other foreign teams with more

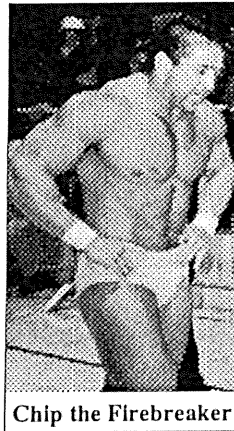
respect and interest for the upcoming NWA tournament. Change the tournament seedings as well, and rank Hase-Nogami as Number One. It also builds up for a future match-up between the two teams beyond the tournament. But will that happen -- nah. **Prediction:** Scott Steiner pins Nogami with the Frankensteiner in another above-average match.

- The Dangerous Alliance (Rick Rude-Steve Austin-Arn Anderson-Larry Zbyszko-Bobby Eaton) vs. Sting's Squadron (Sting-Ricky Steamboat-Barry Windham-Dustin Rhodes-Nikita Koloff). This should be a very good match, as it is really hard to screw up a War Games match-up. But another substitution would really spice up this match-up. Have Big Van Vader replace Zbyszko in the match.

Begin the PPV with Paul E. Dangerously announcing he has contracted Vader to work the match. Have all the other members of the D.A. act completely unsurprised except for Zbyszko. Then have Dangerously announce that it is obvious one of the original team members has to sit out this match and, through "a coin flip," Zbyszko is out. Zbyszko can then storm off. Sting must enter this match first and sell like a fiend, but eventually gain the victory. He should

defeat Vader with the scorpion. But, if WCW wants to continue the Vader-Sting marriage, have Vader crush Sting after the match and make him do a stretcher job. On TV in upcoming weeks, Zbyszko could then argue with Dangerously about how had he been in the match, the D.A. would have won. However... **Prediction:** Babyfaces win when Sting makes Zbyszko submit and the heels leave their teammate laying in the ring.

Notes: I was told Turner Home Entertainment is spending \$250,000 on pyrotechnics for the show. If the interest for this PPV show translates into the buy rate, there goes any WCW profit ... My dream scenarios will never come to pass as NJPW has a major card in Osaka, Japan May 17 with Hase teaming with Antonio Inoki and Vader facing Tony Halme. Someone should have had the foresight to get those people on this WCW card ... Southern vs. Van Hammer was taken off the pay-per-view show, and Chip the Firebreaker was replaced by S.B. Tracey ... A bunch of wrestling fans are gathering at 4 p.m. May 16 in the lounge of the Holiday Inn Airport hotel in Jacksonville. We are all then heading over to an International Wrestling Federation show at the Mayport Naval Base later that evening. Come one, come all.



Chip the Firebreaker

Spotlight on: Vince Russo

In Issues 30-31 of **Three Count**, the plight of Pro Wrestling Spotlight founder John Arezzi was featured in a lengthy interview. Arezzi, who produces a newsletter and hosts a radio show under the PWS logo, explained the details of his split with Vince Russo, a New York City video store owner who sponsored Arezzi's show. The effect of the split still lingers today. Arezzi has not been able to pay for the air time for his weekly radio show on WEVD the past two weeks, but returns to the air May 10. He is also producing the PWS newsletter without Russo, and has agreed to give up to a three-month subscription for free for anyone who subscribed to the PWS produced by Arezzi and Russo.

Russo was offered a chance for a response as soon as the Arezzi interview was printed, but he never replied. "I got the issue, and as soon as I saw John's picture, I ripped it up without reading the interview," Russo said. But Russo has agreed to speak now.

The format of this week's Spotlight is different than the norm. I read the transcript to Arezzi's interview to Russo over the phone May 6, and stories of how and why the split transpired are different on both ends. Excerpts of what Arezzi said that Russo disagreed with will be reprinted, with Russo offering his side of the story afterward. Russo himself is producing a newsletter called *Vicious Vince's World of Wrestling* and began broadcasting a weekly radio show on WGBB in Babylon, NY from 6-8 p.m. on May 8. This interview was written in chronological order, with John and Vince discussing about how they met to their January 5 debut on WEVD. Because of a taping snafu, some of Vince's comments were accidentally not recorded. However, a new transcript of those remarks will be printed in next week's issue. Next week will also feature Russo's comments on his meeting with WWF owner Vince McMahon, New York Post columnist Phil Mushnick and former Matwatch editor Steve Beverly.

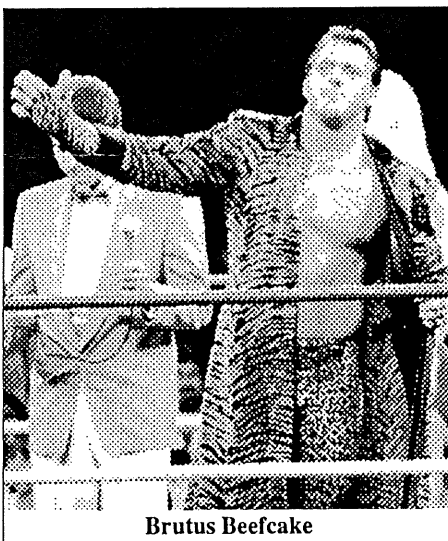
• (Editor's note: Preceding this quote, Arezzi explained he met Russo through a wrestling promotion and approached him for possible sponsorship late in 1991. Russo became interested in funding a newsletter and Arezzi's radio show). *I started to listen to him a little more intently, but something in my gut didn't feel right about him, especially when he began to seriously talk. He said he wanted to transfer the newsletter production to his place of business and work from there.*

VR: That is true. I can understand his apprehension. But the newsletter was my idea. He had never done a newsletter before, and I basically pushed him into doing one. The newsletter was going to be funded by me as far as mailing, printing, typesetting, artwork and production. That is why I wanted everything running through my office at the video store. I was just about as apprehensive as he was, but at this point in time, the newsletter was not going to cost him anything. That's why I wanted some control over it.

AM: How did you become associated with Arezzi?

VR: I had done three huge promotions with WWF stars — **Jake Roberts**, **Brutus Beefcake** and **Demolition**. I had 2,000+ (people) at my video store. The only problem was the WWF charged me \$4,500, and I couldn't sell photographs. I didn't make a dime out of it. It was out of goodwill. I hooked up with John, and he got me the **Honky Tonk Man**. This is not a big issue, but I wasn't satisfied with it because we didn't draw at all. But,

basically, that was my fault. I think it was the fact Honky Tonk Man was a heel and wasn't wrestling at the time. I didn't blame John at all for that. But what happened was,



Brutus Beefcake

in the weeks to come, John let me know about his financial difficulties. For instance, he didn't know if the show was coming on each week because he had no money. He never asked me for money, but he let me know he was having financial difficulties (Editor's note: Arezzi claims a personal debt of \$50,000). From a business stand point, I said to myself, "Geez, this guy has all these connections in the wrestling business, but he's not making any money. Why? If I had these connections, I really feel I could make it work." I honestly felt John wasn't making money or making it work because he was one man, and it was just too much work for

him. I thought that if I financed him and helped him work on it, we would be a two-man team and the project will begin to make money.

• *I was apprehensive when he said we had to get off WGBB if we were going to do the newsletter because WGBB has such a limited audience in broadcasting out of Babylon ... Ironically, at the same time, I was talking to WEVD about moving over, but I thought the cost for an hour (\$1,053) was too expensive. He said we should make a move, and I said I really don't want to do it. WGBB extended me an awful lot of credit through my lean times, more than \$7,000. But he had these grand ideas about the newsletter, and he enticed me.*

VR: As far as the two radio stations go, keep in mind that at this time, he had no money. I'm saying to

myself that with this newsletter, if we go on a 50,000-watt station, we're going to be able to reach more people and sell more newsletters. However, the motive for me wanting to move to WEVD was this: John owed WGBB \$7,000, like he said. This was at the beginning of the year.

WGBB was not going to let John go on the air until he gave them x-amount of dollars. I don't know the exact figure, but John needed a couple of thousand. That couple of thousand was going to come from me, because he had no money.

Now, here I am as a business man, saying to myself, "Why should I give a 1,000-watt radio station a couple of thousand dollars of my money to keep him on the air when I don't owe them money or had anything to do with him owing back money. Especially when I can go on WEVD, give them \$2,000 and be on a 50,000-watt radio station?"

AM: With a clean slate as well.

VR: Exactly.

AM: In turn, I guess John still ends up owing WGBB \$7,000.

VR: As a matter of fact, I'm going on WGBB, and he still owes them the money. They know I have absolutely nothing to do with that.

AM: Were you going to help him pay them back had this venture worked out?

VR: Oh yeah. I don't want to bad mouth John. But if things would have worked out, a portion of John's percentage would have been used to pay the old radio station.

- *We were to start on WEVD Jan. 5, but one thing that was really strange happened when we were putting together our first newsletter to coincide with the debut of the radio show. He said we were obviously going to have to have a full-page ad for the newsletter. On that, he said he would like it to be the Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio hour hosted by John Arezzi and Vince Russo.*

VR: I asked John about being on the show, and he turns around and says, "Hey, you're not going to be my co-host, are you?" Which to me was fine. I let him do his thing. I never said a word, because that was his thing. So he wants to talk about me taking over. Sure, I had to take over because of his past history.

- *That's maybe why I'm \$50,000 in debt. I consider myself a good journalist and I do a good radio show, but I have not proven to be the best businessman in the world.*

VR: He had no choice. There was nothing more he could have done. The fact of the matter is, even if he had done this on his own, there's no way he could have gotten the name incorporated because of the people he owed money to. That was not a bad business move. He had to do that, because we cannot be coming out with a newsletter that reaches thousands of people and not be incorporated. I have a family. They would have sued me. To this day, it wasn't a bad business move.

- *Later into January, I'm really having a hard time*

with his writing, the redundancy and simplicity and stupidity of some of the things he was writing about, especially his TV columns.

VR: I wish he would have told me. I didn't know he felt that way. I was writing a TV column, and I was going through every match on *Prime Time Wrestling*. A couple of readers wrote in and said they didn't like that. So I changed it. As people wrote in, I got more of a feeling of what I was writing and changed it.

- *I wondered what the listeners and readers would say when they looked at this crap. Sure enough, I started getting phone calls that people were really enjoying some parts (of the newsletter), but asking where the hell did I get Vince Russo.*

VR: I think at this point, we were starting to split off. I think John was trying to write for his wrestling friends who want to know everything. I was writing more toward the casual fan, the kids, the parents, the people in my shoes. I was trying to address the people who were like me. John was trying to address the people who were like him. This is what was happening with the two different styles of writing. I was trying to be very careful with my writing level, the things I said to make it funny and enjoyable. I am a parent with two kids. This is what I wanted to read. John is single, a hard-core wrestling fan, is not a parent and doesn't have kids. He was writing from his perspective.

AM: Did you guys ever get together and try to figure out what direction this was going in?

VR: Yes, we did, and John always told me it was good that we showed two different perspectives. That it was good that we didn't always agree. I mean, we had 350 subscribers in three months. I don't think that was bad. I don't know. Is that bad?

AM: Not at all. But, remember, you guys sent out something like three million sample issues.

VR: We sent out 1,000-1,500 newsletters a week for six weeks. You're talking about (the cost of) mailing alone...

AM: And you're paying for all this?

VR: Absolutely. I have the log to prove it.

- *He wasn't very entertaining to read. I figured we must be getting a lot of negative letters, but I never saw them. That's something else that irritated me. We were getting a stack of mail from listeners and newsletter readers each week, because we were picking up 40-50 new subscribers a week. But he kept everything real secretive.*

VR: I kept the letters, because basically everything was going to the office in my video store. Basically, the letters we were getting were from people sending subscriptions. "Sign me up for six months, sign me up for three months, etc." Any time we got a letter where people were commenting on the newsletter, it went into the "Letters to the Editor" section. The other mail was just mail. John kept asking me for the mail, but I told him,

"John this is all this is. If they have any comments on the newsletter, it is going to our 'Letters to the Editor' section. I'm sending them right over to the typesetter, so I don't even have those letters." What would be the point in me trying to keep the letters from him? He's ridiculous. One thing I really found shocking, and to this day I don't understand ... I read other newsletters. We never got any letters talking about any of the issues in our newsletter. It was completely weird to me. The whole time we wrote the newsletter, we very rarely got any letters on anything we wrote.

AM: What do you mean?

VR: Like if John wrote an editorial, people were writing letters (showing they were) more interested in where the Ultimate Warrior was. For some reason, they weren't writing letters about the things in this newsletter. To this day, I can't understand it. John wrote a column called "Mat Memories." Ninety percent of the mail we got were readers giving their own personal "Mat Memories," which we printed. They never discussed anything John or I wrote.

AM: What kind of message does that send to you?

VR: I don't know. I still don't know. They were subscribing. They were reading it. I read (Dave) Meltzer's (newsletter) and all the mail he gets, and I don't know.

- He said we get a lot of letters, but people were not really writing to us about what we were writing in the newsletter. He said he would give me a whole box of letters he. He never did. And as I was doing the show each week, I noticed his ego was stating to get bigger and bigger and bigger.

VR: I have a problem with that. I made it a point to never talk on the radio, because I saw how important it was to John. I sat next to him the whole time, and the only time I ever said anything was when he asked me. I knew how important being "John Arezzi, talk show host," was to him. So I let him go with it. As far as ego goes, I don't know what he's talking about.

AM: Did John think he was going to be getting paid a salary for working with you in this partnership? Because it sounds to me like you guys weren't making too much money.

VR: No, we were losing money. It cost me \$10,000 in three months. Out of my video business.

AM: And John Arezzi spent how much?

VR: Zero.

- Then he announced that he has discovered a wrestler that he wants to put through wrestling school. I said I didn't want any part of that. I know the business, and I don't want be involved like that. I have enough of my own problems. I was in the rock and roll business, and I managed bands and singers. I don't want to have to play baby-sitter or look out for someone's welfare and future. He said he was going to take him to Johnny Rodz's wrestling school. He acquired some phone numbers from me when he was trying to do things

to set up interviews. So he finds a big black guy named Bo Davis with blue eyes. First, Vince agrees to trade advertise for training this guy. Then he said, "I'm gonna be in the school, too. I'm gonna be a manager. This is gonna be great. I'm gonna start writing a column for the newsletter called Making of a Champion." Little things like this really started getting to me.

VR: What you have here, with all these things getting to him ... the guy wanted me to pay for the show. He was going to be the only one who was allowed to have anything to do with wrestling. Here I was financing it, this was my idea and something I wanted to do. Why the hell should this get to him? This was my decision. I wanted to go through it with Bo (Editor's note: Vince said Bo is a long-time customer at his video store, which is how he met him. More explanation next week). I thought it would be a great experience and be great for the newsletter, you know, doing an insider-type of thing on what goes on in wrestling school. I thought it was a great idea. At the time, John told me, "Oh, I think that would be a great idea. It would be interesting reading." Now he says, "Oh, that bothered me." Never did he say that. I don't understand why that bothered him. It wasn't costing him a dime.

- Now the WWF scandal is really starting to break, and he really gets irritated when we didn't talk for a few days when I was working on stories. He called me to ask what was happening. I didn't share too much of that with him, because I felt it was too serious to share with someone who has only been in the business for a couple of months.

VR: As long as John is on the air, that is all he cared about. He didn't care what it cost me. He didn't care we had no sponsors or advertising. All he wanted to know was that on Sunday night from 10-11 p.m., he was going to be on the radio. Period. That's it. That's why when it came to the radio show, I laid off. It was that important to him, and it wasn't that important to me. The money we were shelling out, the this and that, it didn't mean anything to him. Bottom line. Look at his old station for crying out loud. He was on the radio every week until he owed the radio station \$7,000. That's all that mattered.

- But in February, I'm starting to enjoy the newsletter more each week. I finally got him to curtail his stupid TV columns, and his "Where are They Now" interviews were good. But each week, he wanted more and more power. When we got involved with the partnership, I said I needed \$500 a week to pay for my personal expenses. My phone bill was never under \$400, and my rent is \$800. He said he would take care of my personal expenses first before putting the money in his pocket. But I have never seen any money. When I handled the advertising, all the money went in my checking account instead of in the pot. At least I was able to pay my bills. Now, when we first got started, I didn't pay my rent for two months.

I figure I'm going to get taken to court any day to be

evicted. I signed three or four advertisers and took \$2,000 to pay my bills early on. That's all I got out of the company since my association with Vince over a four month period of time. The newsletter money was coming in, and I wanted to know every week what we're spending. It's like pulling teeth as far as that went. The newsletter mail, booster club news ... everything was coming to his address. I'm not accusing him of stealing, but I needed to know what was happening.

VR: I curtailed the TV columns. When he had his own radio station and he took all the advertising money in his own account and he was able to pay his bills ... that is why he owed the radio station \$7,000. All the money he was making from advertising, he was keeping. I am a business man. When I was involved with WEVD, we never owed them any money, because the bottom line was that if we did not have the money, we were not going on the air. Plain and simple. There was no credit or nothing, because I didn't do business that way. If we didn't have the \$1,000, he was not going on the air. Keep in mind, a lot of times that \$1,000 came from my pocket, because we never missed a week. When I was with John, we did not miss a week because of finances.

The fact of the matter is, he didn't sign three or four advertisers. Any advertisers he signed were from a lead from me. I did the work on the phone. I just couldn't go over and make an appearance. He signed zero advertisers on his own. None. As far as the \$2,000 as the only money he ever got, that is absolutely correct. I cut him a check for \$2,000 and maybe \$50 a couple of times. I lost \$10,000. I lost \$10,000. He made \$2,000. Bottom line. Bottom line. As far as showing him the book, I always showed him the book. But I didn't want to make it an issue of how much money in the red we were, because I wanted to keep going and keep working to get over the hump.

I was the one laying out the money. I never asked him for any money. I just asked him to work a little. To go out and get the advertisers and hit the pavement. This guy didn't do anything all week but go on the radio for one hour and talk on the phone. I basically was like, "Listen man, you have to go out and get sponsors. I'm laying out a lot of money here. I'll do it, but you have to help me out in other ways." All he got was \$2,000, that's absolutely correct. But I lost \$10,000. That's the bottom line. Does he get into the car at all?

AM: No.

VR: Let me tell you another thing. Here I am laying out the money to go on the air, laying out money for printing, this and that. I've got everything documented. He goes after this company called "Cars for Cash" to advertise on the show. One week before we're about to go on the radio, he pulls me aside and said, "Vinnie come here. I have to talk to you." I said OK, and he told me, "I got 'Cars for Cash' as an advertiser. The

only thing is we're not getting money from them. I got them to give me a car." Alex, I'm laying out the money from my own pocket, and instead, he goes out and gets a car. But you know what I said? I said, absolutely nothing.

I have a partner sitting right here in my office with me, and when I told him that, he said, "What are you? Some kind of an asshole?" But I said absolutely nothing. He said he needed a car, he had no way to get around, so he cut this deal. This deal was already done. He didn't approve it with me, didn't talk to me about it, but he did it. That could have been a potential \$500 a month (advertiser), I don't know. But he took the car, told me about it after the fact, and said absolutely nothing about it. I'd like to know what he's doing now, because he has the car but hasn't been on the radio.

I have a big problem, even in my video business, of paying people who don't do anything. I would have had no problem in doing whatever I could for him (in regard to his debt), but in my opinion, he was doing absolutely nothing. To get him to move or do something was almost like begging him to go out and try to get advertising. I would get on top of him every single day, because I know all he used to do everyday was be on the phone. I just had a real problem with that from my end, busting my ass with my two businesses, doing the newsletter in between, going to wrestling school and this man just home on the phone every day and doing the radio show for one hour on Sunday. I had a real problem with that.

Even though I am a very good motivator, it was almost impossible to motivate him to work. Now the picture was becoming a little bit more clear to me as to why he wasn't making any money. Because he was very lazy. And what was starting to bother me is ... one thing that really bothers me is having to depend on other people. With what we had going, I had to depend on him a lot. Like I said, in my opinion, he was doing nothing. I was working in my store doing everything from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. five days a week, and also working on the weekends, and I was really beginning to have a big problem with him not carrying his weight. But keep in mind, we never missed a week on the radio.

• *I was more and more frustrated every week, and I was getting irate calls from friends of mine. "How come you're not answering our letters or printing them? Can't you take any criticism?"*

VR: What you just said to me right there, he never said to me. Never, ever, ever. I would have just said, "Who are you talking about and what letters?" I don't know why I would have a problem with criticism. We're writing a newsletter, the newsletter is coming out every week, so you're always going to have your critics. But what you just said, he never said a word.

Letters

Editor Goes Wrong Way: Russo Offers Catalog?

Dear Alex,

I wanted to get a World Wrestling Federation merchandise calendar, but I couldn't afford to buy a WWF magazine. Does Vince Russo's newsletter come with a WWF catalog?

-- Harry White
St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Alex,

I come to Florida several times a year on business and to visit family. I try to get to the Sportatorium in Tampa when in Tampa, but I wanted to know if you had any phone numbers of promoters who run shows from Tampa to Ft. Myers, Orlando and West Palm Beach.

-- Bob Wahlquist
Sunnyvale, CA

AM: The biggest independent promoters besides the group at the Sportatorium (the ICWA) are Eddy Mansfield's International Wrestling Federation and Henry Raines' Suncoast Pro Wrestling. Mansfield's mailing address is 999 West Lancaster Road -- Suite 3, Orlando, FL 32809, and his phone number is 407-438-6411. Raines can be reached at 813-758-3684, and his address is 5748 West 14th Street, Bradenton, FL 34207. Mansfield runs shows frequently throughout the center of the state, and his live shows are generally very good. The ICWA runs shows at the Sportatorium on Thursdays and Saturdays. Raines has upcoming shows scheduled in Bradenton on May 16, July 25 and, tentatively, a TV taping October 3.

Dear Alex (Wrong Way Corrigan),

Regarding your change of address from Gainesville (in northern Florida) to Miami (in southern Florida), I can see that editing a weekly grappling sheet has begun to affect you. Aren't people supposed to go north in the summer and then south in the winter? I can't wait until August rolls around to see if you return to Gainesville or my copies of Three Count will be post-marked from Cuba.

-- Jeff Mullins
Pro Wrestling Sushi editor
San Jose, CA

Dear (Mutt and) Jeff,

I figured if you used a title from the early 1900s, I could, too. Actually, if you are looking for the affect writing a weekly sheet is having on me, check out my report card. I am heading north for the summer, by the way. My 10-week internship at the New York Times begins June 1. The newsletter, though, will continue to come out weekly. As for August, I really hope my grades are high enough that I can continue at the University of Florida. If not, a Miami postmark could suffice as a Cuban postmark throughout most of Dade County.

Terminology

As per several requests, Three Count is presenting a glossary on inside terms used in the wrestling business. A substantial number of TC subscribers are newcomers to the inner-workings of the business, and hopefully the glossary will help decipher some of the things I write. A special thanks to Mike Rosenthal for the list. Space permitting, Part II will run next week.

- **Angle:** Something that occurs to help generate interest in an upcoming feud or the direction a promotion is headed. Example: Earthquake squashing Hulk Hogan repeatedly in 1990 to add interest to their subsequent match at Summer Slam.

- **Babyface:** The good guy. Also called "babies" or "faces."

- **"Blows up":** What happens when a wrestler gets too tired to perform well.

- **Booker:** The match-maker who contrives the promotion's storylines and feuds. Thus, Dusty Rhodes "books" WCW.

- **Do a job:** When a wrestler loses a match via pinfall.

- **Dark match:** A match at a television taping that was not taped.

- **Enziguiri:** Karate kick to the back of the head; known in the WWF as Bad News Brown's "ghetto blaster."

- **Heat:** The crowd noise or fan interest generated by a match, feud or angle.

- **Heel:** The bad guy.

- **Jobber:** A wrestler who always loses, especially in preliminary (squash) matches. Examples: Lee Scott, Barry Horowitz.

- **Juice:** In the wrestling context, refers to a wrestler bleeding. Out of the ring, refers to anabolic steroid use.

- **"Over":** When a wrestler or move is popular with fans. Example: Hulk Hogan is over with U.S. wrestling fans; Sting's scorpion deathlock is over as a finishing maneuver.

- **Pop:** When the crowd goes wild, usually at the end of the match.

- **Sambo wrestling:** A Russian-invented sport that combines amateur wrestling, some karate and submission maneuvers.

- **Screwjob finish:** When a match ends inconclusively; Also, the name of Vic Stanley's newsletter.

Both Vince's Wrong on Mat Scene

I leave for one week -- just one week -- and I return to anarchy and chaos.

I say nice things about people and promotions and weeks later -- Boom! They either break up or get torn asunder (CMLL). Events like this can have a negative effect on a guy. Can I retract everything I said about the lucha libre way of doing things from a couple of columns ago?

I should be happy that I m

Paul Hanlin Jr.

finally liberated from night school after a frenzied final week of studying three hours a day. But I'm kind of numb right now, so if this seems like a stream of consciousness column, it's only because it is.

Isn't it time for Vince McMahon to exploit real life again? Namely the riots after the kangaroo court let walk those who flayed Rodney King? Oh, he *has*? On the very night that racist jury spoke, the Big Boss Man was getting his clock cleaned by The Convict at a WWF television taping in Rochester, NY. What's next? The Convict dragging a fan out of a truck, clobbering him over the head with a piece of masonry and doing a sack dance over his near lifeless body?

NEWS FLASH!!! Sid "The Squeegee Man" Justice actually got nabbed by the Whiff's model-for-the-rest-of-earth-let-alone-pro-sports anabolic steroid testing. Wow! All you in the sheets who griped about no suspensions have now been put in your place. Proof positive that we're on the road to a 'roid-less Fed. And if you believe any of what I've just said, feel free to think Vince Russo is a shining star in wrestling's sheet-dom.

Swell guy, this other Vince, one of many seduced by the McMahon aura. Where logic, common sense -- and the mailing list for Steve Beverly's *Matwatch* -- disappear. When you acquire someone's mailing list, Mr. Russo, shouldn't you at least make a token effort to reimburse its owner? Or are you waiting or the dough that will be rolling in once Whiff-heads appear on your radio show, which will no doubt translate into higher ratings than Howard Stern, to pay him back?

Larry Zbyszko a babyface? The man who introduced Bruno Sammartino's head to a chair in the most shocking heel turn of the last decade? The chief executive officer of "Larryland"? The man who has had 16 glorious years in the business? A babyface? Say it isn't



so, WCW. And his replacement in the Dangerous Alliance will be The Diamond Studd? Mr. "I'm the BAD guy!"? Better yet, if I praise this disaster in the making, maybe it will backfire on them. Saying nice things about folks in *Three Count* lately has been scientifically proven to be the kiss of death.

Can anyone see any good coming out of the CMLL split? It's a shame that damaging news regarding our favorite sport isn't just limited to these United States.

The June Clash of the Champions (which will be shown for free) looks to be 300 percent better on paper than this weekend's *Wrestle War* (for \$20 on pay-per-view). How 'bout a Terry Gordy-Steve Williams vs. Hiroshi Hase-Akira Nogami final in Philadelphia July 12 at the Great American Bash? All Japan Pro Wrestling vs. New Japan Pro Wrestling in my backyard. Or the Dangerous Alliance vs. The Dangerous Alliance (Arn Anderson-Bobby Eaton vs. Rick Rude-Steve Austin) in the second round? Or Miguel Perez Jr. and El Boriqua lasting more than 10 seconds with the Steiners? How about Perez-Boriqua vs. The O'Deas in a semifinal match? With the winner to take on The Headhunters vs. Tom Zenk-Marcus Alexander Bagwell survivor (whoops, wrong promotion) for the NWA tag-team title? A buy rate of 6.0, easy; actually, a .006 is more likely -- maybe. As for the Malenkos, well ... with the luck in reverse I'm having, I hope Ricky Steamboat and Nikita Koloff win the thing.

Seriously, they could have a ball with this tournament. But with Dusty Rhodes booking, who knows? When we get lose to June 16, I'll put on my booking cap and tell you who should go over, but won't.

The Dave Meltzer-meister on WCW Saturday Night, per our editor's sources? I'll say kind things about that. Seems the U.S. post office in Campbell, CA, is still mad at me for my remarks about Dave's *Donahue* debut, as four out of the last five *Wrestling Observers* since then, counting last week's, have arrived two days late or more.

WCW's next Philadelphia card is May 29, and yours truly will be there. Maybe they will put tickets on sale for the Bash then. And if by chance the Bash isn't coming here, Mr. Kip Frey, you are hereby served notice that WCW will owe the wrestling fans of the Delaware Valley one PPV. I, for one, think Starrcade '92 would be quite a nice trade-off for a Bash whose back-up venue is rumored to be Albany, GA.

Paul would appreciate any comments, objections or biting criticisms to his weekly column. Send letters, etc. to Three Count or 5283 Glenlock St., Philadelphia, PA 19124.

Newcomers Debut on EMLL Show

The future of lucha libre in Japan looks much less bleak after the past week following the aftermath of the **Antonio Pena-Paco Alonso** split in the CMLL promotion. It appears Alonso will keep the time slot on Galavision, because his name was on the contract signed with the Televisa network. Of CMLL's 165-man roster, only 15 wrestlers are signed with Pena. But don't count out Pena yet. Thanks to Steve Sims of *Lucha Libre Weekly* for his help gathering this news. Now, on with the analysis of the May 10

Carlos Rey



Galavision show.

1) The **Maya Warriors** (**Guerrero Maya-Damian el Guerrero-Guerrero del Futuro**) defeated **El Tigre Universitario-Aguila Solitaria-Solar** in two of three falls. **El Tigre** has not been seen in EMLL rings in quite some time. **Solar**, if I'm not mistaken, jumped to this group from the rival **UWA** promotion. Every time I see the **Guerreros**, I enjoy them more. Each of them can wrestle, even the weird-looking **Damian**. The first fall was highlighted by some great high spots between **Solar** and **Futuro**. **Maya** pinned **Solar**, **Futuro** pinned **Tigre** and **Damian** made **Solitaria** submit. The **rudos** entered the second fall overconfident, which led to their demise. **Solar** pinned **Maya**, **Solitaria** pinned **Damian** and **Tigre** pinned **Futuro** with a flying body press off the top rope. Before describing the third fall, it should be noted that the **rudo** team of the **Mayas** had not broken many rules, giving us a scientific bout. Also, it seemed the wrestler who needed to prove himself here was **Solar**, and he gave a good showing. **Tigre** was triple teamed for the pin, **Solitaria** was pinned after a splash off the top rope by **Maya** and all three **rudos** made **Solar** submit. **El Tigre** looks very familiar to me, but I can't place who he is.

2) The **rudo** team of **Guerrero de la Muerte-Guerrero Negro-Hombre Bala** lost to **tecnicos** **Ulises-Filoso-Ciclon Ramirez** in two of three falls. **Ulises** is really **Tony Salazar**, a top-notch draw in the early and middle 1980s as a babyface and a really good wrestler. The **Guerreros** are newcomers, and **Bala** is **Pirata Morgan's** brother. After the **tecnicos** lost the first fall by countout after not being able to answer the referees' count, the match was evened up when the **rudos** were disqualified in the second fall. The **rudos** were in complete control again until **Ramirez** (who was helped to the dressing room during the match to sell the **rudos'** brawl-

ing) came back. **Filoso** pinned team captain **Negro** to end the match. This was a very good match, and laid the foundation for an upcoming mask vs. hair match between **Ramirez** and **Bala**.

3) **El Jalisco-El Dandy-Angel Azteca** (**tecnicos**) topped **Espetro de Ultratumba-Espetro Jr.-Bestia Salvaje** (**rudos**) in another two-of-three fall encounter. **Jalisco** is also a newcomer to the promotion, but the announcers knew a lot about his background. Both **Jalisco** and **Dandy** went after **Salvaje** with a vengeance, but were both unable to gain a significant advantage. The **tecnicos** did win when **Dandy** pinned **Ultratumba**, **Jalisco** made **Espetro Jr.** submit and **Salvaje** surrendered the fall before fighting. In the second fall, both **Espetros** made **Azteca** submit, **Salvaje** pinned **Jalisco** after landing with his butt on **Dandy's** chest off a top-rope leap (like the finishing move the **Rougeaus** used in the mid-to-late 1980s). **Dandy** took a beating this fall. The third fall was full of torn masks and bleeding wrestlers. **Jalisco** returned the favor by pinning **Salvaje** (the **rudo** team captain) to end the match. **Salvaje** then issued a hair vs. hair challenge to **Dandy** and hair vs. mask challenge to **Jalisco**. **Espetro Jr.'s** mask was ripped off by the **tecnicos** after the match.

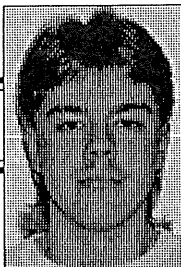
4) The **rudo** team of **Blue Panther-Nagasaki** (**Kendo Nagasaki**)-**La Fiera** defeated **Ultimate Dragon-Love Machine-Mascara Sagrada** in two of three falls. The **rudos** attacked the **tecnicos** prior to the ring introductions, with **Panther** attack **Machine** ferociously. When **Panther** slapped **Machine** in the mouth, the announcers said maybe this would keep **Machine's** mouth shut. The **tecnicos** came back to win the fall, though, as **Dragon** pinned **Panther**, **Machine** pinned **Nagasaki** and **Sagrada** pinned **Fiera** with the **huracarana** (**Frankensteiner**). The second fall was also excellent, with even **Nagasaki** looking good (and that says a lot). **Fiera** made **Dragon** submit after a shoulder breaker, **Nagasaki** pinned **Sagrada** and **Machine** was unable to answer the bell. It looked like the **rudos** would completely dominate the deciding fall, as **Machine** was being triple-teamed to the point it looked pathetic. But **Dragon** made a comeback to even things out. This came down to the team captains -- **Machine** vs. **Panther**. After **Machine** began enjoying an advantage, **Panther** used a power bomb and got the pin with his feet on the ropes.

*Carlos Rey has watched lucha libre for more than 10 years, and cannot get enough of the style. He not only writes a weekly column for **Three Count**, but, in addition, has tapes of Galavision shows available. Write to him at 996 West 45th Place, Hialeah FL 33012 for more information.*

Onita Could Benefit from SWS Deal

A story that could influence the future of Japanese wrestling appears to be brewing. According to the *Wrestling Observer Newsletter*, the Great Kabuki, an officer in the Super World Sports promotion, had a meeting with Atsushi Onita and Tarzan Goto, the top brass of Frontier Martial Arts Wrestling (FMW). While it was reported in Japan that Kabuki was considering a jump from SWS to FMW,

John Muse



the truth is the SWS financial backer, Hachiro Tanaka, is trying to buy into the FMW promotion.

The FMW officially opened its doors in October 1989 with many obstacles to overcome. Onita had a very weak talent roster, and he and Goto were the top stars. The rest of the roster consisted of karate guys like Masashi Royagi (who now works for New Japan) and wrestlers not working for the top two promotions (NJPW and All Japan Pro Wrestling). Another obstacle was the belief that there were already too many promotions in Japan. With AJPW, NJPW and the now-defunct Universal Wrestling Federation shoot-fighting group running shows, the FMW's future did not look bright.

Simple supply and demand paved the way to the FMW's success. Onita (a former midcard wrestler himself) supplied the one thing the other promotions wouldn't -- violence at its highest possible degree. This violence was accomplished through gimmick matches that surpassed anything that had ever been done before, like electrified barbed wire matches and exploding land mine matches (where "land mines" covered by a wooden board were laid outside the ring). The public saw Onita as a hero, a common man who fought against all odds and gave everything he could to win (It could be argued that Akira Maeda proved this with the foundation of the UWF, but Maeda had guys like Nobuhiko Takada, Masaharu Funki and Yoshiaki Fujiwara underneath him).

Despite this success, the FMW has had some problems as of late. Last year, Mr. Pogo (FMW's top heel at the time) and some FMW wrestlers and executives split from the group over a pay dispute. Pogo and co. then founded yet another group, this one called WINGS. At this time, WINGS is trying to sign away the FMW's top heels, The Sheik (Ed Farhat) and Leon Spinks. Onita cannot afford such a loss (I know that sounds absurd considering the talent, but it is true) and is probably having to pay them a decent amount to stay. FMW also needs financial help to promote its May 24 show at the Tokyo Ariake Coliseum.

Onita could benefit greatly from a deal with the SWS. Not only would FMW get the financial help it needs, but chances are that Kabuki would come in to feud with Onita. Kabuki may not be a big deal on SWS cards, but he would be a fresh face in FMW. Onita's future would also profit. Eventually, the gimmick matches may lose their appeal and the FMW would be in trouble. If that occurred, Onita could then jump to the SWS.

P-P-Pro Wrestling New-w-w-s: Jushin "Thunder" Lyger won the "Top of the Super Junior" tournament April 30 in Tokyo's Sumo Hall by defeating Samurai (Osamu Matsuda) with a frankensteiner off the top rope in 21:15.

- Koji Kanemoto will don the Tiger Mask outfit once again to face The Pegasus Kid (Chris Benoit) May 17 at the Osaka Castle Hall. The main event of that card is Riki Chsohu defending the IWGP title against The Great Muta.

- Bull Nakano defeated Aja Kong to retain her WWWA world title April 25 in the main event of All Japan Women's Pro Wrestling Wrestlemaniac show in Yokohama.

In other title matches, Bison Kimura retained the All-Pacific title by defeating Toshiyo Yamada, Manami Toyota won the IWA women's title from Kyoko Inoue, Takako Inoue-Mariko Yoshida defeated Debbie Malenko-Sake Hasegawa for the Japanese women's tag titles and Bat Yoshinga retained her WWWA martial arts title by defeating Kim Torisu.

Next issue: I'll keep this brief, as I have 10 minutes to get the newsletter printed. We have switched our printing schedule to every Wednesday (it used to be every Tuesday). My Teddy Long interview got wiped out because of my poor taping techniques, thus the Vince Russo interview ran a week earlier than expected. Thanks to Charlie Mattos and Dr. Mike Lano for the photographs. Next week will feature a live report from Jacksonville, the conclusion of the Russo interview and more. See ya'!

LATE NEWS -- Bill Watts was named vice president in charge of wrestling operations on May 12. Watts, the former owner of the Universal Wrestling federation, is virtually in charge of all facets of WCW's wrestling product. More details next week.

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